



"My Technical Consultant, Tracie Jarentowski, has been great, I can't thank her enough. She pretty much has taught me to love YoungStar."

*- Ana Rojas, Director
DeColores, Milwaukee*

DeColores: "An Everyday Thing"

A Great Start

Ana Rojas began her journey towards YoungStar when she joined forces with her mother in 2005 to open a family child care. By 2007, they had such a long waiting list for enrollment that they decided to open a group child care program named, DeColores. DeColores now has a 28 child capacity with infant, toddler, and preschool rooms. Right away, Ana encouraged her staff to continue their education by getting their Associate's Degrees. "The staff was kind of afraid to go to school," says Ana. "So, we all went to school together!" Both Ana and her mother attended school and graduated with their entire staff. "I love what I do," says Ana. "To do this job you really need to like it, and to live it. It's an everyday thing." The daily work of Ana, her mother, and their staff, is evident. DeColores has come a long way thanks to their efforts, and to YoungStar support as they moved forward.

Their Creation

Once Ana learned about YoungStar and what they had to offer, she took advantage of their guidance and began to work with her technical consultant, Tracie. Early on, Ana admits, it was a bit of a struggle. Most of the DeColores furniture had to be replaced to be the right size for young children, and designated play areas needed to be established. Ana says she went from planning lessons based off of themes to observing and evaluating each child in her class, then planning individually appropriate goals and activities. They even changed the way they did art. "Before, we thought that the children's art has to look like something, but it doesn't," explains Ana. "It's their creation." Now teachers put out art materials and let the kids create what they like. An approach, says Ana, that has made the whole class enjoy art time. With all of the many changes and improvements they have made, DeColores has earned a 3 Star rating—and they are not done yet.

Quality Staff & Parent Engagement

Ana plans to go for a higher Star rating later this year, and is currently focusing on the retention and training of staff. Ana says she is continually working with new staff to get them up to speed on how things work at DeColores so that they are prepared for the program's next rating. Ana is also focusing on making the DeColores budget more effective, and on engaging the families of the children in care. "Kids love to have their parents come and be with them in the classroom," says Ana. "They feel so special." Ana says she is working on even more ideas to encourage parent involvement, and with the great parents and staff DeColores has, she is hopeful. Not only that she can successfully engage the families, but that all her endeavors on behalf of DeColores will succeed, as together Ana, her staff, the children and their families, continue their hard-earned climb through the Stars. "I am just so glad that YoungStar came to us," says Ana. "It is hard at first and it takes time, but this is quality. There is a reason for it."

Wisconsin's Stars are Shining

YoungStar informs parents, recognizes quality providers and brings resources and support to programs committed to improving quality. But what it's really all about is helping Wisconsin children shine bright.